

DOD Security Cooperation: Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation

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Introduction

As part of recent efforts to modify existing security cooperation authorities, the FY2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) (P.L. 114-328) enacted several new provisions that modify the budgeting, execution, administration, and evaluation of Department of Defense (DOD) security cooperation programs and activities.

To date, the Department of Defense (DOD) [has spent billions of dollars](#) on efforts to train, equip, and otherwise support foreign military and security forces. In the 114th Congress, both the [House](#) and [Senate](#) Armed Services Committees examined various aspects of DOD security cooperation efforts. Yet, prior to this year, there has been no comprehensive, standardized framework to judge the effectiveness of security cooperation programs, as authorized by various security cooperation authorities (see CRS Report R44602, *DOD Security Cooperation: An Overview of Authorities and Issues*). In the [conference report](#) accompanying the [FY2017 National Defense Authorization Act](#) (NDAA), the conferees noted that although there has been an increase in security cooperation activities over the past 15 years, DOD “has not applied sufficient emphasis and resources to develop a comprehensive framework to assess, monitor, and evaluate its security cooperation programs and activities,” commonly referred to as AM&E.

Legislative Requirement for DOD AM&E

Congress enacted legislation requiring DOD to develop a standardized, objective evaluation of DOD security cooperation initiatives. Section 1241(m) of the FY2017 NDAA added a new provision to Title 10, Ch. 16 of the U.S. Code: [10 U.S.C. 383 \(Assessment, monitoring and evaluation of programs and activities\)](#). This authority requires that the Secretary of Defense maintain a program of AM&E for DOD security cooperation programs and activities. These activities are to be funded by monies available to the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) and DOD for security cooperation programs. The provision requires the Secretary of Defense to submit to the congressional defense committees a yearly report on the status of the AM&E program, including details of the activities conducted under the AM&E program and an evaluation of the lessons learned and best practices. The statute also requires that summaries of completed evaluations be posted to DOD’s public website, though the Secretary of Defense may redact or omit any information to “protect the interest of the United States or the foreign country or countries covered by such evaluation.” Pursuant to [10 U.S.C. 381](#), funds to be used for AM&E activities are required to be identified in future DOD budget documents.

Implementing DOD AM&E

Following the enactment of the [FY2017 NDAA](#), DOD issued [DOD Instruction \(DODI\) 5132.14](#), which establishes DOD AM&E policy and identifies the roles and responsibilities of various entities within DOD related to AM&E activities. The DOD Instruction requires AM&E for all *significant* security cooperation initiatives, which are defined as a “series of activities, projects, and programs planned as a unified, multi-year effort to achieve a single desired outcome or set of related outcomes.” It also outlines the AM&E framework and applicable standards that are to be applied by security cooperation officials.

The instruction assigns responsibility for the oversight and management of evaluation activities to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P)). Under the direction of the USD(P), the Director of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) determines the standards for AM&E training in the security cooperation workforce. There are other DOD stakeholders involved in AM&E efforts, including the USD for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, the USD (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer of DOD, Geographic Combatant Commands (GCCs), and Functional Combatant Commanders.

The instruction provides an overview of the AM&E framework, which adopts a hybrid approach and is required to conform to U.S. Government and international standards and best practices. The hybrid approach utilizes a decentralized assessment and monitoring model, combined with centralized evaluations administered by USD(P). The instruction encourages DOD AM&E officials to coordinate AM&E activities with host nation representatives, other donors, and implementing partners to ensure the efficiency of data-collection efforts.

According to DOD, the general process and standards for the new AM&E framework include the following:

- Initial Assessments (e.g., analysis of foreign country’s willingness to implement and sustain security cooperation initiatives);
- Initiative Design Documents (IDDs) (e.g., identification of specific security cooperation activities to be conducted, authorities to be utilized, the manner in which they will be synchronized, measurable and time-bound objectives, theory of change, and performance management plans);
- Performance management and monitoring (e.g., output monitoring, outcome monitoring, site visits, and data collection and organization); and
- Evaluations that comply with specific standards (e.g., usefulness, independence, methodological and analytical rigor, cost effectiveness, and adherence to international and U.S. government-recognized ethical standards).

USD(P) is responsible for maintaining a centralized office to assess the efficacy of significant security cooperation programs in meeting DOD objectives. Once an evaluation report is finalized by USD(P), the instruction calls for relevant stakeholders to develop a memorandum within 30 days to respond to the evaluation’s conclusions and any recommendations made by USD(P). The DOD Instruction also specifies that any lessons learned from evaluations will be disseminated to inform future decisions pertaining to security cooperation planning and resources.

Although the DOD AM&E policy is a recent development, Congress has previously required assessments of select security cooperation authorities. For example, subsection (f) of 10 U.S.C. 2282 (Authority to build the capacity of foreign security forces) authorizes the use of funds to conduct assessments and evaluations of activities conducted under the authority. [Other organizations](#) have also conducted [studies](#) examining various [aspects](#) of security cooperation programs.

Congressional Oversight

As the DOD implements its new AM&E policy, Congress may consider the following:

- What are the funding, staffing, and training requirements necessary to implement and maintain AM&E activities and standards?
- To what degree, if any, does DOD's AM&E framework differ from methodologies adopted by other agencies?
- Will foreign countries involved in DOD security cooperation activities be willing participants in AM&E efforts throughout the lifecycle of security cooperation programs?
- To what degree will AM&E activities conducted by DOD support other congressional efforts to evaluate the role of security cooperation more broadly (e.g., §1204, P.L. 114-328)?

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